

Matthew 19:27-30 The Provision of Rewards

All right, we are continuing and hopefully will finish up Matthew 19:27-30. We are going to begin the narration at verse 23. We took 23 to 26 last week, so 27 to 30 this week.

The title of the section for last week is The Provision of Salvation. As a rich young ruler approached Jesus and said, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" And Jesus did something that many people think is strange. Jesus said, "Sell all that you have, give your proceeds to the poor, and come and follow Me." Sell what you have, give to the poor, and come and follow Me. We came to learn that Jesus put His finger on the very thing that caused them to not follow the Lord. Jesus read off the commandments for how you should treat your fellow human being, your fellow man, and the man said, "I already did all of that, what am I lacking?" Jesus said, "You're lacking a relationship with the Lord. You spend most of your time with your wealth and with your possessions." And we studied how that it was easier for this rich man to spend all week long on his possessions and building his wealth and then take an hour off on Saturday for the Sabbath day and go to the temple. For the Jews their Sabbath day was Saturday. And so Jesus was putting His finger on that very lifestyle of taking time out, thinking you can just check the box by going to church or going to Temple and spend the rest of your week living for yourself, and building for yourself, and acquiring for yourself.

Jesus was teaching that what a person spends most of his or her time on, what a person spends most of his or her effort on, and what a person spends most of his or her money on, is their god. Our god is what we give ourselves over to and what we put our efforts into and spend most of our time in. That's why we get so frustrated because there are a lot of things that require a lot of time and effort and money. We find ourselves stuck in the rut. But Jesus was telling this man, "You share some of your wealth with your fellow man to help out, but you are living for yourself. It is not a daily walk with the Lord." We will see today the Lord will use again the word *follow*. He is not talking to people who are just believing in Him but following Him. There is a difference.

And so, when this rich young ruler walked away in verse 23, **Jesus said to His disciples, "Truly I say to you that a rich man with difficulty will enter into the kingdom of Heaven."** This rich man had difficulty choosing between giving up his possessions, which required all of his devotion and all of his time - difficulty in giving that up in order to follow Christ. And Jesus said, "You see this man walking away? It's with difficulty that rich people enter into the kingdom of heaven."

"And again I say to you, 'It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter in the kingdom of God.'" We saw last week that the word *needle*, that is exactly what it means. It's a *sewing needle* in Matthew's presentation. In Luke's presentation it's a *surgeon's needle*. A needle that has an eye on the end, where you thread things through. And Jesus said, "It is easier to thread a camel through the eye of a sewing needle, than it is for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven."

In verse 25, **When the disciples heard it, they were exceedingly astonished, saying, "Who then is able to be saved?"** The Jews, just like we in our culture, believe that a person was rich because God had blessed them, because they were doing everything right. And people were poor and sick because they were doing everything wrong and they were in their sin. And so, when Jesus said about the camel through the eye of a needle, it is easier for that to happen than a rich man to enter into heaven, they were just blown away. "Well, if rich people can't enter into heaven, we are doomed. Who then can be saved?" Then nobody can be saved in their estimation.

But having looked at them, literally *having stared at them*, Jesus said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." I've heard that quoted many times over the years pertaining to many things. But here, specifically, it applies to salvation. With men salvation is impossible. Whether you are rich, or you are poor it is impossible to save yourself. It is only possible for God. God's the only one that has the ability, the possibility, the capacity, to save people. A person must have a spiritual birth experience where God gives us His Spirit to live within. Once He gives His spirit to live within, His Spirit never leaves. It's permanent. That's what causes a person to live throughout eternity with their sins forgiven and with Christ in heaven is the spiritual birth. Salvation is not earned; it's not based on what we do. It's not produced even by our lifestyle change. It is produced by a spiritual birth from God. It's a work of God upon a person's life.

Now you can believe the truth, and we will carry this over into today, you can have convictions about what the Bible says and you can believe truth from out of the Bible and think that you are saved. Believing is just part of salvation. I said it last week, I'll say it again. A person who is a follower of Christ and is saved that person is a believer, but not all believers are saved. We can believe certain things and because we hold those certain convictions we think that we are saved, but in reality we have to experience a spiritual birth, which causes us and makes us to be followers of Jesus Christ, not just believers. Jesus wasn't just looking for believers. He was looking for followers. That's who a disciple is. Jesus didn't call people to become Christians, He called them to become disciples and followers of Him.

And in watching and listening to Jesus and watching the rich man walk away and listening to what Jesus had to say, Peter in verse 27 for today, **Peter answered and said to Him, "Behold, we left all things and we followed You,"** past tense, **"What then will be for us?"** This guy walked away, this rich man walked away and he couldn't leave everything in order to follow Jesus. But Peter is telling Jesus, "But we have left everything and we've walked away from everything, so what is there for us?" That might sound a little arrogant, a little proud boasting there on Peter's part, but it's interesting if you notice the text. Jesus never corrected him. Jesus never said, "Ah Peter, no you haven't." In fact, Peter was not exaggerating, Peter was answering correctly, if you check the Scriptures because they did leave everything to follow Jesus. See Peter was married. I Corinthians 9 tells us, and the other disciples, they were married too. They had families. They had relatives. They owned homes and yet they left it all to travel off and on for three years with the Lord. They came home periodically, but when Jesus told them to come, they came.

This is probably the number one area that I hear about on a daily, weekly, monthly, yearly basis, are complaints because the men have been called to follow Jesus and they choose to do something the Lord wants them to do and the wife gets upset, and the kids throw a tantrum, or the wife wants to go to Bible study and the men throw a tantrum. When Jesus calls you to follow Him, He calls you to follow Him. There are responsibilities but following Christ is a sacrifice for everyone.

Back in Matthew 4:18-22, remember Jesus came down by the Jordan River and Peter and Andrew who were fishermen were fishing down at the shore. And Jesus said, "Come and follow me and I will make you fishers of men." They just dropped everything and came. They didn't try to find replacements. They just came. Then they went a little further and then there was James and John the sons of Zebedee, they were with their father in the boat mending nets, they were in business with their dad. So, they are in the ship mending their nets, and Jesus called them, "Come, follow Me," and immediately they left their father, and the business, and everything, and they came and followed Jesus. That is quite a response. Jesus doesn't ask everybody to leave your family and leave your business and come and follow Me, and then just come wander the countryside; but it sure is the example that Jesus is showing, "This is what it means *to follow*. It means when I call you to come, you come." So, Peter was correct. Peter was saying, "This man couldn't do it. He couldn't leave everything to follow Christ, but we did. So, what's in it for us?"

And so Jesus in listening to this, He answers in verse 28, **Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you, You, the ones who followed Me,"** past tense. Again, notice the wording, Jesus didn't say, "You the ones who *believed* in me."
"You the ones who followed Me, in the regeneration whenever the Son of Man should sit upon the throne of His glory, you yourselves also will sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

Jesus is looking for followers. Not people who come to church so much as it is people who literally seek the Lord in prayer, seek the Lord in guidance as to what the Lord would have them to do in everything that they do. The Lord has a will, He has a plan, He has a design for everything in our lives. For all the people that are in our lives, for all the events that come up in our lives. Jesus has a plan. He has a will. It is not a religion. It's a relationship. And that's what we are studying, we are studying about relationships, not religion. Just religion people both have their beliefs and convictions but relationship with Christ we follow Him. Seek Him out as to what He would have us to do.

So He says, "The ones who followed Me," this is for them. "In the regeneration whenever the Son of Man should sit upon the throne of His glory," this is a word for the *restoration* which is the new birth depicting when Christ comes and sets up His kingdom on the earth for one thousand years. We, His people are going to come back with Him. But He says, "You yourselves also will sit upon twelve thrones," He is speaking to the twelve apostles, "judging the twelve tribes of Israel." So He says, "You want to know what's in it for you, you've got responsibility. You are going to be given a capacity and a function to judge and to be leaders in the next kingdom."

And if you ever wonder about us, you know that the Scripture also says about us - as Paul reprimanded the Christians in Corinth beginning with I Corinthians 5. There was a young man in their congregation that was involved in sin and they told him he had to repent, and he refused, and so they just let it go. They didn't do anything about it. And so he chastised them and said, "You need to discipline this young man. If he refuses to repent you need to tell him he needs to leave the Fellowship. A little leaven leavens the whole lump. A little sin affects everybody." And so Paul says, "With my authority you judge this person and have him leave." In fact, and he went on in I Corinthians 6 to say, "Don't you have any wise people amongst you that can judge among the wrongs that are done by people in your church? Do you have to take them to court? Do you have to judge your brother in the presence of nonbelievers? You should have a wise person amongst you that can judge as to what's right and wrong. You've got the Spirit of God there."

As a matter fact, he says, "You should be able to do that. You should be able to have developed spiritual judgment." Listen to what I'm saying. Every believer, you spend a lot of time in the Word, a lot of time in fellowship, you should be developing spiritual judgment, being able to discern and judge what's right and wrong spiritually. What is of the Lord what isn't. It's a process.

He says back in I Corinthians chapter 6:1-4, "**Dare any of you having a matter against another go to law before the unjust and not before the saints? Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world?**" When Christ comes to set up his kingdom, we are going to be put in positions of leadership on the world. There will be nonbelievers here during that thousand-year reign and He will put believers in positions of leadership.

"And if the world shall be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Do you not know that we shall judge angels?" Well, angels are in trouble aren't they? We are going to judge them and the angels are sitting there going, "Boy, you don't know what you are talking about, how do we follow you?"

"How much more, things that pertain to this life? If then you have judgments of these things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are the least esteemed in the church." So what he's figuring is that the church sets up people who are the most important people in the church because they're going to make decisions that are most important to them and to the political system of the church. Take the least esteemed, the one who is judged to be the least important, let them judge. They have the Spirit of God just like everybody else. They will not have a specialty item that they want to see. They just want to judge what is right.

So, the twelve apostles will be on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. We are going to be in places of leadership judging the world, judging the saints, leading the other saints.

And then verse 29, here's a verse for you, Jesus said, "**And everyone who left houses, or brothers, or sisters, or fathers, or mothers,** (some scribes took this next phrase out, but it is in the Greek text) **or wives, or children, or lands,** (that is agricultural lands. Anybody who has

left these houses, brothers, sisters, fathers, mothers, wives, children, or lands) **on account of My name, will receive** (first of all) **a hundred-fold** (or one hundred times more than what they lost) **and will inherit eternal life.** What that rich man thought he was giving up, if he had given it up he would've gotten back a hundred times more when Christ sets up His kingdom. He would've been a leader of wealth and possessions on the earth as he leads saints to show them what sacrifice is and what it means to follow Christ. So He says, "People hesitate." They find it difficult to leave houses, their brothers and sisters, even their fathers and mothers, and their children. How many people do you know put the Lord ahead of their children? Or even the cultivated lands on account of Him, will receive one hundred times more in return.

Remember back in Matthew 10:34-36. Jesus said, "**Don't think that I came to bring peace upon the earth.**" Remember this theme for Christmas, "Peace on earth, goodwill towards men." But Jesus said, "**Don't think that I came to bring peace on the earth but I came to bring a sword. I came to set a man at division against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's enemies shall be they of his own household.**" It doesn't mean enemies in the sense of angry and hateful, even though that might be involved. It means they will be of a different spirit and as you seek the Lord for what the Lord wants you to do these other people in your household who are not under the guidance of God's Spirit are going to want you to do something different. And they, in essence spiritually, will become your enemies, even though they are relatives, even though they are close to you.

In Matthew 10:37 Jesus said, "**He that loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me.**" He didn't say, "You can't love mother and father," but He says, "If you love your mother and father more than Me, you're not worthy of Me." "**And he that loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.**" Because you'll find conflict. You will find the Lord wanting you to go one way and or doing it one way and family members, relatives, friends, will want you to do it differently. Jesus said, "You must love Me."

In fact, in another place in Luke's gospel, Luke records that Jesus said, "Unless you hate your mother and father son and daughter and houses and lands for my sake you cannot be My disciple." The word *hate* means *love less*. In other words, when you go to make a decision you have to love the Lord so much the other person thinks you hate them. "You never do what I want you to do. You are always seeking the Lord, this Jesus thing you got going." "That's right. He's my Lord. I'm seeking what He wants me to do." And sometimes it can seem as though we hate them but that is not the case.

In Matthew 12:47-50, "**Someone said to Him, Behold, your mother and your brother Jesus, are standing outside desiring to speak with You.**" And Jesus is sitting inside the house teaching. **But He answered and said to him, "Who is My mother? And who are My brothers?" And He stretched out His hand towards His disciples and said, "Behold, My mother and My brothers. And whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in Heaven, the same is My brother, My sister and My mother."** You might lose friends and might even lose family members because they want to do sin, they want to do the flesh, they want to do what they want to do, and they want you to do what they want you to do. You might

lose, but you gain a hundred times more. More brothers and sisters in Christ than you can count. More friends in Christ, more encouragers in Christ than you can count.

"So what's in it for us?" Peter says. Oh, you don't even know. You think you're giving it up? You think you've lost everything? Well, you have, but you've gained back one hundred times more than what you lost, plus eternal life. What a deal.

Verse 30, **But many first will be last, and last will be first.** Heard that said many times and in many different contexts. The last will be first in the first will be last. The first in God's eyes are the Hebrew and Jewish people. They are His chosen people, His elect. His promises are for them. But if they reject Christ as their Messiah, they will be last. Others, non-Jewish people, who have received Christ become first, become the possessor of the promises. And those who are last will be first. You would think that the Hebrew and Jewish person would be first. You would think that the rich man would be first, because he's rich, so he's favored by God. But whatever we esteem with our human judgment, whatever we esteem to be first is last with God. Whatever we esteem to be important in the human, it is not important to God. Whatever we esteem in our human judgment to be last and unimportant, even people that we think are not important, God thinks is important and He considers them first, because they became followers, not rejecters.

Quite a text. Having left all. That's why Jesus said - and we studied it earlier - Jesus said, "In order to be My disciple, you must deny yourself, reject yourself, take up your cross daily, and follow Me. Follow Me." Deny myself, deny my human friends, deny my human family, for the sake of Christ. It might include them. But when I hold to them more than I hold to Christ it becomes a problem.

And now let me say this, and this might shock you, I hope not. Satan is not fair. Satan is not fair. He will use anybody and anything to take you away from Christ, to take you down a different direction. He'll take the person that you love the most, that you cling to the most and use that person against you.

Alright, let's close with prayer.